

## ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY HABITS – WHO IS WILLING TO ADAPT?

### A SURVEY IN A HEALTH CARE SETTING

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#### Background and Aims

The health care setting is not a priori related to environment concerns. Even so, we assumed that while in a doctor's office, people may be willing to reflect about aspects of quality of life other than their health problems, such as environment issues. Effectively complying with the needs of the environment will require the cooperation of a large part of the population. Knowing the views of an unselected population, as encountered in a doctor's office, can be a first step in order to engage people to adapt to environment-conforming behavior. We inquired about awareness and interest in environment issues with visitors to a doctor's practice.

#### Methods

People visiting the practice were asked in consecutive order to fill out a 29 question survey, while they were sitting in the waiting room, before being seen by the physician.

The questions asked involved: the degree to which the environment was seen as endangered today and in the future, people's behavior relating to consumption and waste production, impact on the state of health as a result of environment influences, and willingness to make changes towards environment-friendly habits.

#### Results

129 questionnaires were filled out; the rate of participation was 59.7% of all visitors.

21 questions inquired about concern for environment issues; 73.8% of answers expressed concern. In 8 questions dealing with cooperation in favor of environment issues, 79.1% of answers expressed willingness to change environment behavior.

#### Conclusions

Participants in this survey showed significant interest in environment issues and willingness to contribute to their improvement, even though they were faced with the subject unexpectedly and with minimal preparation. It is clear that expression of concern is not equivalent to action. The results of the survey could serve as a stimulus to arouse discussion and facilitate changes in

behavior. It could be made more representative by applying it to additional settings, whether health institutions or other public settings.

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